



The Rhode Island Black Heritage Society

January 2, 2016

Karen Scott
Rhode Island Division of Planning
One Capitol Hill, 3rd Floor
Providence, RI 02908

RE: HARD SCRABBLE – SNOW TOWN TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT
AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAM (TIP) PROPOSAL

Dear Ms. Scott:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society (RIBHS) the following transportation enhancement and historic preservation project is proposed to preserve historic African-American site markers in the City of Providence. This proposal renews and amends a project initially submitted and approved as the *Hardscrabble Square Project* in February 2005.

This application is submitted for Statewide Planning consideration based on information received from RIDOT on revised transportation program policy.

The original *Hardscrabble Square* project was a \$45,200 project to create a site to commemorate the prior-existence of the 1820's African-American Hard Scrabble (Addison Hollow) Settlement in Providence and the race riots that took place in Hard Scrabble in 1824 and then again in Snow Town, an extended African-American Settlement, in 1831. That project as finally approved would have created a historic site on a small triangle of land where Canal Street meets North Main Street. Informational panels, plaques, a path, trees and benches would form a reflective and visible memorial.

This revised Hard Scrabble – Snow Town combined site proposal is less expensive than the original project. There are two plaques in place in Providence. One plaque is mounted on a stone pedestal commemorates Snow Town. That plaque is located in Roger Williams National Park along Smith Street. The other plaque that commemorates Hard Scrabble is mounted on a flat, low profile stone on an inaccessible traffic island at the corner of North Main and Canal Streets.

**Rhode Island Black
Heritage Society**

**123 North Main Street
Providence
Rhode Island
02903**

RIBHS Board
William Bundy
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Keith Stokes

The Rhode Island Black Heritage Society was the sponsor for the 2005 Transportation Enhancement *Hardscrabble Square Project* and was the sponsor for placing the current plaques.

It should be noted that there have been efforts made since 2005 by RIDOT and the RIBHS to move the relocation of the Hard Scrabble project along. The initial effort by RIDOT and the RIBHS to obtain approval to place the Hard Scrabble plaque in the Roger Williams National Park was a lengthy endeavor. It is believed that this new project effort will result in a more favorable outcome with the park service.

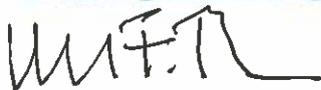
The exact location of the Hard Scrabble and Snow Town neighborhoods within northwestern Providence has been a matter of some dispute between historians. Richard Lobban, an adjunct-professor in African-studies at the U.S. Naval War College and a former-professor at Rhode Island College, holds the studied opinion that the Hard Scrabble riot took place in a location that is on Rhode Island State House property. Ted Sanderson, executive director of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission reported that his research shows that the Hard Scrabble neighborhood was located around the base of Olney Street in Providence. Multiple sources reflect this disagreement in historical research.

This *HARD SCRABBLE – SNOW TOWN TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT AND HISTORIC PERSERVATION PROJECT* would simply position both plaques at the site of the existing Snow Town plaque in Roger Williams National Park. The Snow Town plaque and the Hard Scrabble plaque would be mounted on separate side-by-side stone pedestals. There is no desire to construct informational panels or change the landscape. This proposal would however request funding for design, printing and distribution of a Rhode Island African-American history timeline and site/way marker map. The timeline and site map would chronicle African-American historic events and sites.

The Rhode Island Black Heritage Society would desire a more inclusive historic perspective of African-American life in Rhode Island than to make a large investment in 1820-1830's race riots while still commemorating those events in Rhode Island history.

The attachment to this letter is the *HARD SCRABBLE – SNOW TOWN TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT AND HISTORIC PERSERVATION PROJECT* Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Application and supporting narratives and a site image. This proposal includes enhancements to safety, easy access to a historic site, historic site preservation and transportation information.

It is my hope that you will accept this proposal for consideration. You can reach me via e-mail at chairman@riblackheritage.org or by telephone at 401-439-0708.



For the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society
WILLIAM F. BUNDY, Ph.D., Interim Chair

HARD SCRABBLE – SNOW TOWN TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT AND HISTORIC PERSERVATION PROJECT

1. **Proposed by:** Rhode Island Black Heritage Society (RIBHS), 123 North Main Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903
2. **Point of Contact:** William F. Bundy, Ph.D., Interim Chair of the RIBHS Board of Directors, Telephone: 401-439-0708 e-mail: chairman@riblackheritage.org
3. **Project Title:** HARD SCRABBLE – SNOW TOWN TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT AND HISTORIC PERSERVATION PROJECT
4. **Project Limits:** Located in the City of Providence with relocation of the Hard Scrabble Plaque from Canal and North Main Streets to the north-end of Roger Williams National Park along Smith Street.

HARD SCRABBLE PLAQUE LOCATION – Note traffic and isolated position on a traffics island at Canal and North Main Streets.



SNOW TOWN LOCATION – Note historic trail marker line (Green) and easy access location. The Hard Scrabble stone pedestal and plaque would be placed alongside of the Snow Town stone pedestal and plaque. The Snow Town pedestal would be reset to the left of center between two trees.



5. **Project Description:** Relocate the existing Hard Scrabble commemorative plaque from an inaccessible and potentially hazardous location on a traffic island at Canal and North Main Streets to the site of the existing Snow Town commemorative plaque in the north-end of Roger Williams National Park along Smith Street. The relocation site would be arranged by resetting the Snow

Town plaque and stone pedestal to position it side-by-side with the Hard Scrabble plaque mounted on a similar stone pedestal. The relocation of the Hard Scrabble plaque would enhance safety for able-bodied and ADA-supported tourists and students who would visit the historic marker.

As a further transportation safety and information enhancement for people who visit Rhode Island Historic African-American sites, it is recommended that an *African-American Historic Site and Waypoint Map* should be designed and printed for distribution. The envisioned map would include a historic time-line and a map of sites throughout Rhode Island. The RIBHS will collaborate with local historians to conduct research and design the map.

6. Project Purpose:

- a. The original Hardscrabble Square project was a \$45,200 project to create a site to commemorate the prior-existence of the 1820's African-American Hard Scrabble (Addison Hollow) Settlement in Providence and the race riots that took place in Hard Scrabble in 1824 and then again in Snow Town, an extended African-American Settlement, in 1831. That project would have created a historic site on a small triangle of land where Canal Street meets North Main Street. Informational panels, plaques, a path, trees and benches would form a reflective and visible memorial.
- b. This revised Hard Scrabble – Snow Town combined site proposal is less expensive than to original project. There are two plaques in place in Providence. One plaque that is mounted on a stone pedestal commemorates Snow Town. That plaque is located in Roger Williams National Park along Smith Street. The other plaque that commemorates Hard Scrabble is mounted on a flat, low profile stone on an inaccessible traffic island at the corner of North Main and Canal Streets.
- c. The exact location of the Hard Scrabble and Snow Town neighborhoods within northwestern Providence has been a matter of some dispute between historians. Richard Lobban, an adjunct-professor in African-studies at the U.S. Naval War College and a former-professor at Rhode Island College holds the studied opinion that the Hard Scrabble riot took place in a location that is on Rhode Island State House property. Ted Sanderson, executive director of the Rhode Island Historical Heritage and Preservation Commission reported that his research shows that the Hard Scrabble neighborhood was located around the base of Olney Street in Providence. Multiple sources reflect this disagreement in historical research.
- d. The Rhode Island Black Heritage Society was the sponsor for the 2005 Transportation Enhancement Hardscrabble Square Project. Based on information on revised transportation program policy, this application is submitted for Statewide Planning consideration.
- e. This HARD SCRABBLE – SNOW TOWN TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECT would simply position both plaques at the site of the existing Snow Town plaque in Roger Williams National Park. The Snow Town plaque and the Hard Scrabble plaque would be mounted on separate side-by-side stone pedestals. There is no desire to construct informational panels or change the landscape. This proposal would however include funding for design, printing and distribution of a Rhode Island African-American history timeline and site/way marker

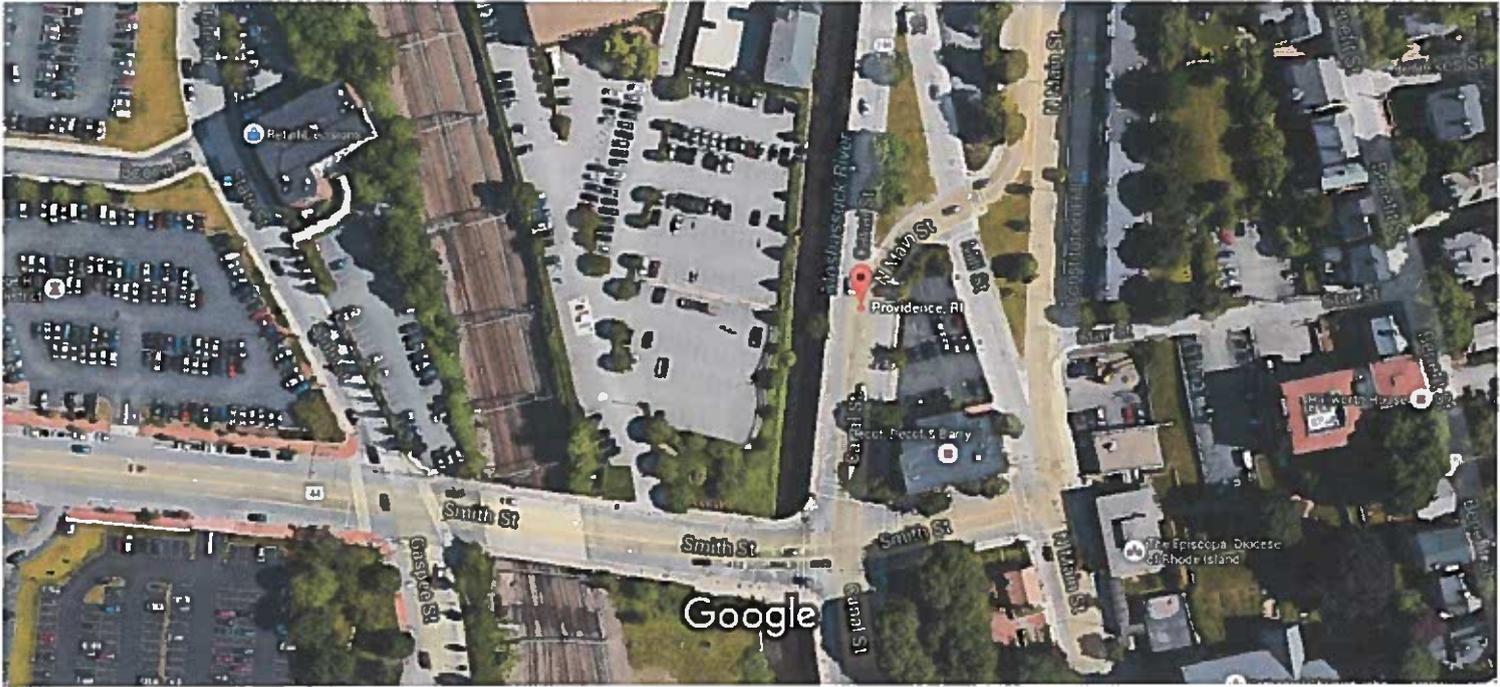
map. The timeline and site map would chronicle African-American historic events and sites.

7. **Need for Project.** The overall effect of the HARD SCRABBLE – SNOWTOWN TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECT would enhance safety and access to the Hard Scrabble historic marker, offer pedestrian access to both historic markers that are linked in history and effect, preserve Rhode Island history and make travel information available to visitors and students who are exploring African-American history in Rhode Island.
8. **Describe anticipated municipal or state transportation network or economic development benefits:** Safety and ADA access to the current Hard Scrabble plaque location is a major concern and limits the benefit of having the historical marker for tourists and history research. Relocation of the Hard Scrabble plaque to the Snow Town plaque location in Roger Williams National Park along Smith Street will enhance tourist access and eliminate concerns about ADA compliance. Both plaques represent significant historic milestones in both the time lines for African-Americans and the evolving general population of Rhode Island. This project will promote walking tours, offer sites for research and promote economic development.

9. Evaluation

- a. **Mobility Benefits:** Mobility for ADA dependent visitors and local citizens will be significantly improved at the Snow Town location.
- b. **Supports Local and State Goals:** Maintaining historic markers and waypoints for public view will support maintaining a high quality of life that has the effect of attracting businesses and professionals to relocate and remain in Rhode Island.
- c. **Cost Effectiveness:** This revised project will result in cost avoidance compared to the previous project and reduce potential exposure to the state by eliminating hazards and ADA non-compliance at the current Hard Scrabble plaque location.
- d. **Safety and Security:** Both safety and security will be enhanced by co-locating the plaques in Roger Williams Park. As shown in the photographs, the Hard Scrabble plaque is located in a dangerous location for visitors and is isolated thus making it susceptible to vandalism.
- e. **Economic Development:** As mentioned earlier, historic sites add to the quality of life and contribute to businesses and professionals relocating and remaining in Rhode Island.
- f. **Equity:** It will re-enforce a positive perception in the African-American Community that the Transportation Improvement Program contains a project that recognizes Black History and relocates the Hard Scrabble plaque to a better location.
- g. **Environmental Impact:** There is no adverse environment impact related to this project.

Google Maps Providence, RI 02904



Imagery ©2016 Google, Map data ©2016 Google 100 ft



ABOVE: NOTE THE TRAFFIC ISLAND LOCATE AT CANAL STREET AND NORTH MAIN STREET. THAT IS THE LOCATION OF THE HARD SCRABBLE PLAQUE. NOTE THE RELOCATION AREA ALONG SMITH STREET IN THE ROGER WILLIAMS PARK.

LEFT AND BELOW: BOTH IMAGES SHOW THE TRAFFIC ISLAND AND THE LACK OF ACCESS WHEN TRAFFIC IS FLOWING.

Providence, RI 02904



SITE LIMITS MAP IMAGES FOR THE HARD SCRABBLE - SNOW TOWN PROJECT

New Project Application

Transportation Improvement Program



CONTACT	Contact Information
	Agency/Organization <u>RHODE ISLAND BLACK HERITAGE SOCIETY</u>
	Contact Person <u>WILLIAM F BUNDY, PHD</u> Title <u>INTERIM CHAIR</u>
	Mailling Address <u>123 NORTH MAIN STREET</u>
	City <u>PROVIDENCE</u> Zip Code <u>02903</u>
	Phone <u>401-439-0708</u> Email <u>chairman@riblackheritage.org</u>

PROJECT INFORMATION	Type of Project <i>select all that apply</i>			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bridge	<input type="checkbox"/> Pavement	<input type="checkbox"/> Drainage	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning
	<input type="checkbox"/> Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Transit	<input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle	<input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian
	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Enhancement	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
	Project Description			
	Project Title <u>HARD SCRABBLE-SNOW TOWN PROJECT (See attached document)</u>			
	Location by Street Name <u>CANAL-NORTH MAIN STREETS TO ROGER WILLIAMS PARK</u>			
	Project Limits - From <u>(See attached project information)</u> To <u>(SEE PAGE 4 FOR IMAGES)</u>			
	<i>Please include an 8.5" x 11" map of the site, indicating project limits.</i>			
	Provide a brief description of the proposed project: <u>(See attached project information)</u>			

Describe need for proposed project:

(See attached project information)

Describe anticipated municipal or state transportation network or economic development benefits:

(See attached project information)

Is the project consistent with the local Comprehensive Plan? Yes No

Is the project on the Federal Aid System? Yes No

Is the project on the National Highway System? Yes No

CRITERIA

Evaluation Criteria

Please address the following topics as they relate to the project. Refer to "An Overview of TIP Guiding Principles" for more information. Submission **must not exceed 2 pages**, single-spaced, 12-point font.

1. Mobility Benefits
2. Cost Effectiveness
3. Economic Development
4. Environmental Impact
5. Supports Local and State Goals
6. Safety and Security
7. Equity

PROJECT ESTIMATES

Project Estimates

	ROW	Study	Design	Construction	Total
Estimated Project Costs	\$0.0	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$40,000
				Total Cost	\$40,000
				Amount Requested through TIP Process	\$40,000

Is there funding from other sources committed to this project? Yes No

Source	Amount
Total	

Estimated date of construction _____

CERTIFICATION

Applicant Certification

I attest that the information provided on this application is in true and accurate.

Applicant's Signature

Date

Chief Executive Officer's Signature

Date

JANUARY 6, 2016

JANUARY 6, 2016

ALL APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY 3:00PM ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 2016